

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03
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R 222254Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3750
INFO ALL EC CAPITALS
AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMEMBASSY LISBON
USMISSION USNATO
DIA WASHDC
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY WARSAW
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
USMISSION USBERLIN
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMCONSUL BORDEAUX
AMCONSUL LYON
AMCONSUL MARSEILLE
AMCONSUL NICE
AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 19989

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, FR
SUBJECT: THE COMMUNIST PARTY STEPS BACK FROM MODERNITY

REF: PARIS 17315
SUMMARY: SWEEPING ASIDE INTERNAL DISSENT AS A
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"FRACTIONAL OPERATION" ENGAGING ONLY A HANDFUL OF "RING-
LEADERS" AND AGAIN REAFFIRMING THAT THE SOCIALIST PARTY
(PS) BEARS TOTAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR LEFT DEFEAT IN MARCH
1978, THE COMMUNIST PARTY(PCF) CENTRAL COMMITTEE ENDORSED
JUNE 19-20 ITS FUTURE STRATEGY, TO NO ONE'S SUPRISE:
THE UNION OF THE FRENCH PEOPLE. IN CHOOSING THIS MOST
CONSERVATIVE AND LEAST IMAGINATIVE OF POSS-

IBLE OPTIONS, THE PCF DEMONSTRATED ONCE MORE THAT IT IS FAR FROM READY TO BE DRAGGED OUT OF ITS TRADITIONAL SHELL OF "TRUE DEFENDER OF THE WORKING CLASS". MORE IMPORTANTLY, IN ADOPTING THE LONG-TERM STRATEGY OF "BUILDING UNION FROM THE GRASS ROOTS" (READ BUILDING A COMMUNIST MAJORITY) THE PCF EFFECTIVELY TURNS ITS BACK ON THE UNION OF THE LEFT TACTIC WHICH PROMISED POLITICAL POWER IN THE NEAR TERM THROUGH SIMPLE ELECTORAL ALLIANCE. COMBINED WITH A PRO-SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY (INTERESTINGLY A SOVIET "STUDY GROUP" HEADED BY VICTOR AFANASIEV ARRIVED JUNE 21 IN PARIS AND WILL VISIT A NUMBER OF FEDERATIONS AS WELL) AND NEAR TOTAL HOSTILITY TO THE EUROPEAN COMMUNIST, FRENCH COMMUNIST ACTIONS REPRESENT A GIANT STEP BACKWARDS FROM WHAT HAD OPTIMISTICALLY BECOME KNOWN AS "EUROCOMMUNISM". END SUMMARY.

1. THE END OF DISSENT?: FOLLOWING UP ON WEEKS OF INTENSIVE PROPAGANDA AIMED AT DISCREDITING AND ISOLATING INTERNAL DISSENTERS, PCF POLITBURO MEMBER CLAUDE POPEREN DELIVERED JUNE 19 THE FINAL, "OFFICIAL" FIGURES:

- ALL 98 FEDERATIONS HAVE APPROVED THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE'S WORK;
- ONLY THREE OUT OF 2,600 SECTIONS HAVE DECLARED THEMSELVES IN DISAGREEMENT;
- 90-100 CELLS (OF 27,000) HAVE EXPRESSED DISAGREEMENT;

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- 1,228 PCF MEMBERS (OF 630,000) SIGNED THE MOST WIDELY CIRCULATED DISSENTING PETITION.

WHILE POPEREN'S FIGURES CAN NO DOUBT BE CONTESTED, IT IS STILL TRUE THAT PCF DISSENT, ALTHOUGH IMPORTANT IN RELATIVE TERMS, DID NOT AMOUNT TO MUCH IN THE ABSOLUTE AND DID NOT SPREAD FAR BEYOND THE INTELLECTUAL CLASS. EMBOFF VISITS TO WORKING CLASS COMMUNIST MUNICIPALITIES, FOR EXAMPLE, CONFIRM A NEARLY TOTAL ABSENCE OF CONCERN FOR THE PROTEST MOVEMENT AND A "BUSINESS AS USUAL" APPROACH TO PARTY ACTIVISM.

2. LEADERS OF THE DISSENT MOVEMENT HAVE ASSUMED A VERY LOW PROFILE IN THE PAST SEVERAL WEEKS AS PARTY PROPAGANDA STEADILY BUILT A CONVINCING CASE OF COLLUSION WITH THE BOURGEOIS PRESS AND THE PS AND EFFECTIVELY ISOLATED PROTESTORS FROM THEIR COMMUNIST PEERS. IF THESE ELEMENTS ARE TO HAVE ANY CHANCE AT ALL OF INFLUENCING THE OUTCOME OF THE 23RD CONGRESS NEXT SPRING, THEY MUST NOW GUARD CAREFULLY WHATEVER CREDIBILITY THEY HAVE LEFT AND TRY TO WORK MORE PATIENTLY WITHIN THE PCF. THEIR ONLY RAY OF HOPE AT PRESENT IS A CONTINUING COMMITMENT BY PARTY LEADERSHIP TO "PERFECT" INTERNAL DEMOCRACY

AND DEMOCRATIC CENTRALISM. FOR THE MOMENT, HOWEVER, IT
WOULD BE FOOLISH TO THINK THAT SUCH CHANGE WILL BE ANY-
THING OTHER THAN SUPERFICIAL.

3. A STERILITY OF STRATEGY: BUT WHILE DISSENT HAS BEEN
STIFLED, THERE ARE OTHER, LARGER PROBLEMS OF LONG-TERM

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 PARIS 19989

STRATEGY WHICH ARE NOT AMENABLE TO QUICK AND EASY SOLU-

TIONS. THE UNION OF THE LEFT IS DEAD (ALTHOUGH THE CONCEPT LIVES ON IN PCF RHETORIC) AND GONE WITH IT IS THE PROMISE OF POLITICAL POWER. ALL THAT REMAINS IS THE CONFIDENTIAL

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VENERABLE UNION OF THE FRENCH PEOPLE WHICH IS NOTHING MORE THAN THE TRADITIONAL PCF STRATEGY OF RECRUITMENT AND ORGANIZATION AT THE GRASS-ROOTS LEVEL. THE STERILITY OF THE CONCEPT AS A POLITICAL TATIC IS OBVIOUS--WHO ARE THESE "PATRIOTS AND DEMOCRATS" WHO WILL ONE DAY RALLY TO THE COMMUNIST MAJORITY? EVERYONE AND NO ONE. AND YET THERE IS LITTLE OTHER RESPONSE FOR A PCF LEADERSHIP WHICH STILL LIVES IN THE DARK AGES OF TRADITIONAL LENINIST THEORY.

4. GEORGES MARCHAIS DESCRIBED THE COMMUNIST STRATEGY AS A PCF PRESENCE IN EVERY POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC STRUGGLE. BEYOND THAT, HE PROMISED NOTHING, BUT PROBABLY HAD NO NEED TO DO SO SINCE THE GREAT MAJORITY OF COMMUNIST RANK-AND-FILE ARE MOST COMFORTABLE IN EXACTLY THAT TYPE OF ENDEAVOR. GONE FOR THE MOMENT ARE THE GRAND DREAMS OF COMMUNIST MINISTRIES, WHICH, HOWEVER, IMPLIED STICKY PROBLEMS OF CLASS COLLABORATION, PS/PCF BALANCE OF FORCES, AND NUMEROUS OTHER CONSIDERATIONS WHICH HAVE COMPLICATED THE LIVES OF PCF LEADERS SINCE 1972. THE RETREAT MAY EVENTUALLY TURN OUT TO BE ONLY TEMPORARY, BUT FOR THE MOMENT IT IS REAL AND ONE WOULD HAVE TO BET THAT IT WILL BE RATIFIED AT THE 23RD CONGRESS.
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